



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Discussion and Direction Regarding Transition of Arts Commission**

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

#### **Summary**

At the June 22, 2004 City Council meeting the Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2005 Budget. Included in the adopted budget was an action to not fund the position of Recreation Superintendent in the Parks & Recreation Department. A stated consequence of that action was to provide for the transition of the Arts Commission into an independent Arts Alliance. Staff is requesting Council provide direction on the preferred process to implement the transition of the Arts Commission.

#### **Background and Discussion**

City Code Section 5.5 establishes an Arts Commission. It was created in 1998. The purpose of the Commission is act in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters pertaining to the arts, including the formulation of policies on the arts, the development of arts related facilities and projects, the selection and placement of public art, periodic inventories of public art, coordinating art related programs with other agencies and civic organizations and the preparation of an annual budget and long-range art improvement program.

With the adoption of the FY 2005 Budget the position of Recreation Superintendent was not funded. The action was effective July 1, 2004. The responsibilities of the Recreation Superintendent included, in general, the supervision of and liaison with the following programs and activities:

- Recreation Program Service Center
- Special Events Service Center
- Day Care Service Center
- Recreation Facilities Service Center
- Arts Commission
- Sister City Committee\*
- Art & Wine Festival

- Recreation Service Area Budget

\*The liaison responsibilities to the Sister City Committee have been transferred to the City Clerk's Office.

Current staffing levels are not adequate to properly oversee these programs and activities. In order to adequately operate the core programs in the department staff believes it is necessary to reduce or eliminate certain responsibilities. The Recreation Superintendent spent approximately ten hours per month on Arts Commission related activities. Remaining staff already taking on additional duties and resources are not sufficient to pick up these responsibilities without jeopardizing core recreation services.

Prior to the elimination of funding for the Recreation Superintendent the Arts Commission had recommended the creation of an Arts Alliance. Council approved this idea as a Priority Calendar item in the spring of 2004. As noted in the project description form, an Arts Alliance could promote the arts in Belmont and would have the ability to apply for grants, which the Commission cannot do in its present form. An Arts Alliance could perform many, if not all, of the duties of an Arts Commission.

The Commission discussed the proposed transition of the Arts Commission into an Arts Alliance, or other type of independent group, at their July and August meetings. The Commission formed a sub-committee to develop the attached Position Statement that communicates the Commission's desire to remain as a regular City Commission. At their August meeting the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the Position Statement.

In addition to developing the Position Statement staff encouraged the Commission to develop ideas on how the City could assist in the transition of the Arts Commission into an independent organization should the City Council make that decision. The Commission chose not to discuss that aspect of the issue. The Commission did discuss remaining as a formal City body without staff support. They would create agendas, post meeting notices, take minutes and provide their own research support. Staff has concerns with this approach, as it is not the way commissions operate.

Potential ways the Council could assist the Commission in the transition include one-time seed funding, collecting information from other arts organizations and assisting with the non-profit incorporation process. Should Council decide to provide such support, staff suggests one more meeting of the Commission for them to develop a transition plan.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of supporting the transition of the Arts Commission into an independent organization would depend on the amount of support (funding), if any, that was ultimately approved by Council. No funds are identified in the budget for such a purpose.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council provide direction to staff for the transition of the Arts Commission into an independent arts organization. If so directed, staff will return with the Commission's plan and an ordinance repealing Chapter 5.5 of the City Code.

### **Alternatives**

1. Repeal Chapter 5.5 of the City Code and do not provide assistance to establish an independent arts organization.
2. Allow the Commission to operate without city staff support.
3. Suspend Commission activity and review the situation next fiscal year.
4. Take no action.

### **Attachments**

- A. Belmont Arts Commission Position Statement

Respectfully submitted,

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Director of Parks & Recreation

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